

REMARKS

The disclosure has been amended to provide a brief description of Fig. 5. Accordingly, it is believed that the objection raised by the Examiner with respect to the disclosure has been eliminated.

The drawings have been objected to by the Examiner for the reasons set forth in paragraph 2 of the Examiner's Office Action letter. As the Examiner will note, Fig. 3 has been amended to identify the element which corresponds to reference numeral 21 as identified in the specification, and accordingly, it is believed that the objection raised by the Examiner with respect to the drawings has been eliminated.

Claims 1, 2, 8 and 10 have been objected to because of the informalities noted in paragraph 3 of the Examiner's Office Action letter. Since all of the original claims have been cancelled from the present application and replaced with newly added claims 13-20 which address the Examiner's objections with respect to the original claims, it is believed that the objections raised by the Examiner have been eliminated.

Claims 9, 10 and 12 have been rejected by the Examiner under 35 USC 112, second paragraph, for the reasons set forth in paragraphs 4-9 of the Examiner's Office Action letter. Here again, since all of the original claims have been cancelled from the present application and replaced with newly added claims 13-20, it is believed that this rejection has been eliminated.

Claims 1, 2, 4, 5, 8, 9, 11 and 12 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Richards (US 2,822,898). Claims 1-8 and 12 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Blake, III (US 5,857,799). Claims 1 and 10 have been rejected under 35 USC 102(b) as being anticipated by Cotter (US 4,583,339). These rejections are respectfully traversed.

As the Examiner will note, original claims 1-12 have been cancelled from the present application and replaced with newly added claims 13-20. Newly added claims 13-20 focus on the embodiment of the present invention shown in Fig. 2 of the present application. Accordingly, the prior art relied upon by the Examiner will be discussed as it relates to Fig. 2 of the present application.

The present application is directed to a structural coupling for connecting together a variety of structures, such as floor and wall panels for buildings, and the like.

The Richards patent discloses a connector for joining together wall panels and other like members. The Cotter patent is directed to another type of connecting system for mounting roofing and siding components to a building surface. The Blake patent is directed to a base channel connector clip which is designed for assembly to construct an electrical wire trunking or duct system for positioning, enclosing and protecting electrical power and/or data wires. Thus, the prior art relied upon by the Examiner represents a plurality of different types of connecting systems which are utilized for connecting a plurality of different types of structural elements together. The present invention provides still another type of coupling device for connecting together various structural components, which is totally, structurally different from all of the connecting devices disclosed in the prior art references relied upon by the Examiner.

Thus, in comparing the connector shown in Fig. 3 of the Richards patent with Fig. 2 of the present application, it can be seen that element 39 which corresponds to the wall strut 18 as shown in Fig. 2 of the present application is not constructed to define coupling slots adapted to accommodate coupling leg formations. In fact, element 39 does not provide slots for element 12, but rather the reverse scenario takes place wherein element 12 which corresponds to side panels 14 in Fig. 2 of the present application provides the slots for accommodating elements 39. Furthermore, the connector shown in Fig. 3 of the Richards patent does not contain a channel section shown as element 8 in Fig. 2 of the present application. In the case of the Richards patent, no element corresponding to the channel section 8 can be found in Fig. 3. Thus, in the

Richards patent, the locking elements 51 are used to lock the web 39 and the panel 12 together whereas in the present invention, as shown in Fig. 2, the snap fitting element is utilized to engage the wall strut and the channel section, which represent completely different elements when compared to the web 39 and the panel 12 of the Richards patent. Furthermore, because of the differences in the structural relationship between the various elements of the respective coupling devices, only a single snap fitting element is required to provide the necessary connection of elements according to the present invention whereas in Fig. 3 of the Richards patent two separate locking elements 51 are required. Thus, the present invention provides a connecting device which is completely different from that of the Richards patent.

The Cotter patent relied upon by the Examiner appears to be even more remote than the Richards patent when compared to the present invention. Thus, the Cotter patent is concerned with a sheet metal roofing system which achieves moisture protection, wherein a roof-length bracket 21 which is anchored to the roof, interconnects with a pan strip 11 which, in turn, connects with another hold-down bracket 21. Since the connecting system in the Cotter patent is utilized to solve problems associated with roofing and siding systems, it is understandable that the structural elements which define the roofing and siding system of the Cotter patent are fundamentally and structurally different from the coupling device of the present invention.

The Blake patent, which is directed to a trunking system comprising economically manufactured components which can be assembled to position, enclose and protect wires positioned therein, suffers from the same deficiencies as the Richards and Cotter patents in that it does not contain the structural components of the structural coupling device of the present invention which defines the structural relationship between a wall strut, a separate channel section and a snap fitting element which cooperate in a structural relationship which is not even remotely contemplated by the Blake patent, the Cotter patent or the Richards patent, either alone or in combination.

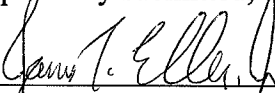
Accordingly, in view of the above amendments and remarks, reconsideration of the rejections and allowance of all of the claims of the present application are respectfully requested.

Should there be any outstanding matters that need to be resolved in the present application, the Examiner is respectfully requested to contact Joseph A. Kolasch, Reg. No. 22,463, at the telephone number of the undersigned below, to conduct an interview in an effort to expedite prosecution in connection with the present application.

If necessary, the Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 02-2448 for any additional fees required under 37.C.F.R. §§1.16 or 1.17; particularly, extension of time fees.

Dated: March 2, 2010

Respectfully submitted,

By 

James T. Eller, Jr.

Registration No.: 39,538

BIRCH, STEWART, KOLASCH & BIRCH, LLP

8110 Gatehouse Road

Suite 100 East

P.O. Box 747

Falls Church, Virginia 22040-0747

(703) 205-8000

Attorney for Applicant

Attachment: Replacement Fig. 3